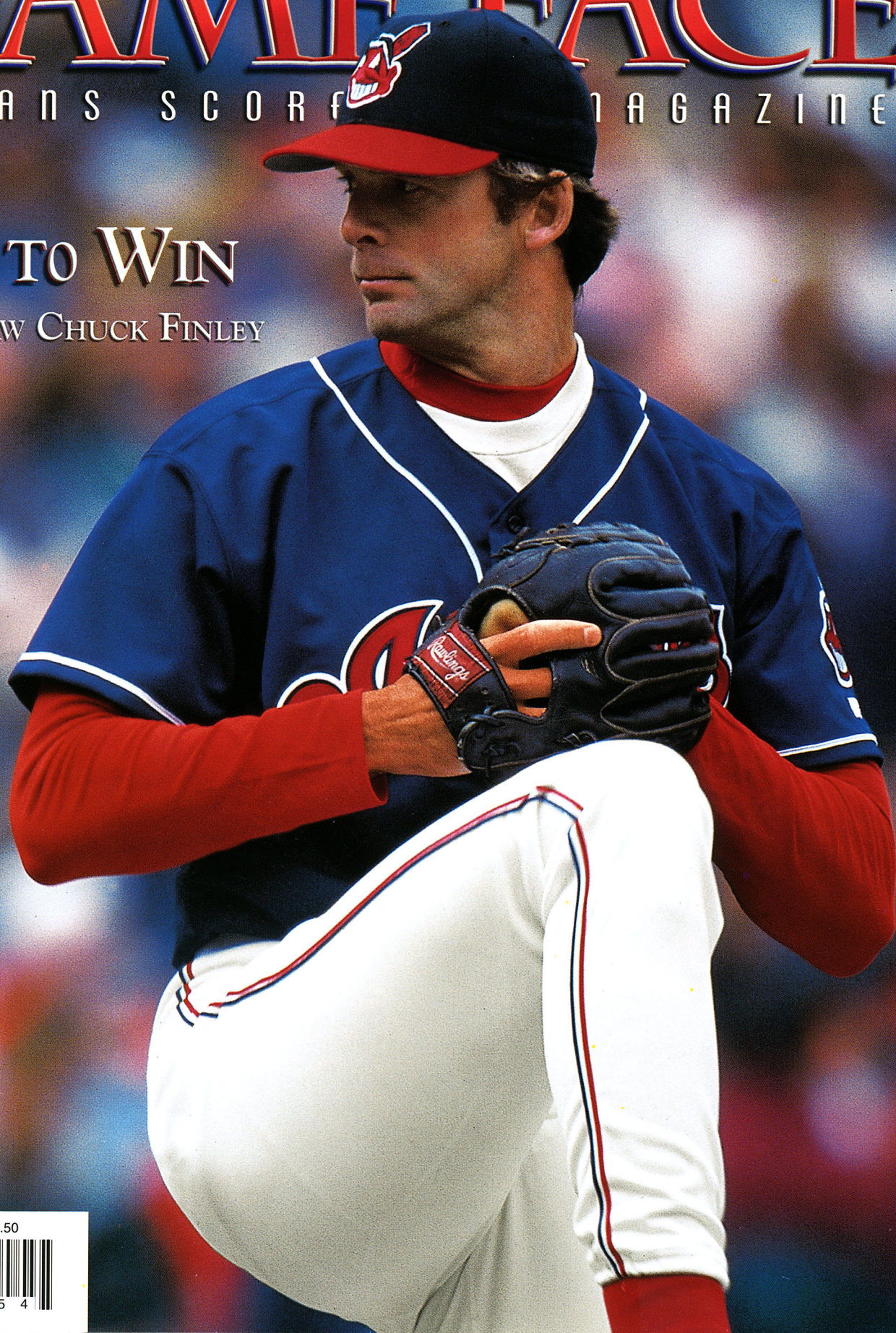


# GAME FACE

INDIANS SCORF MAGAZINE

## FIN' TO WIN

SOUTHPAW CHUCK FINLEY



May 2000 GameFace

\$2.50



Photo: Gregory Drezdson





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## PUBLICATION ORDERS

To order a subscription or single issue of GAME FACE, please call 216.420.GIFT or toll free at 800.38.TRIBE.

## Credits

Our thanks to everyone who assisted the Advertising and Publications staff of the Cleveland Indians in the development of this publication.

## PUBLICATION DESIGN & LAYOUT

Zorc Photo & Design  
with contributions from Herip Associates and ZZ Design

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Cover and game action by Gregory Dretdzon (unless otherwise noted)

## PRINTING

St Ives  
Cleveland



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Before this season, the Tribe acquired lefty Chuck Finley. Both he and the Indians have something the other desires: Cleveland offers Finley excellent prospects for post-season play while the “go-to guy” from the Angels offers the Tribe an effective left arm.

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The designated hitter and big salaries may have stifled the nuances of playing for a single run, but “Little Ball” is not dead. Ironically, the Indians – known for their big bats – possess three accomplished “Little Ball” practitioners.

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# FIN' TO WIN

BY BILL NEEDLE

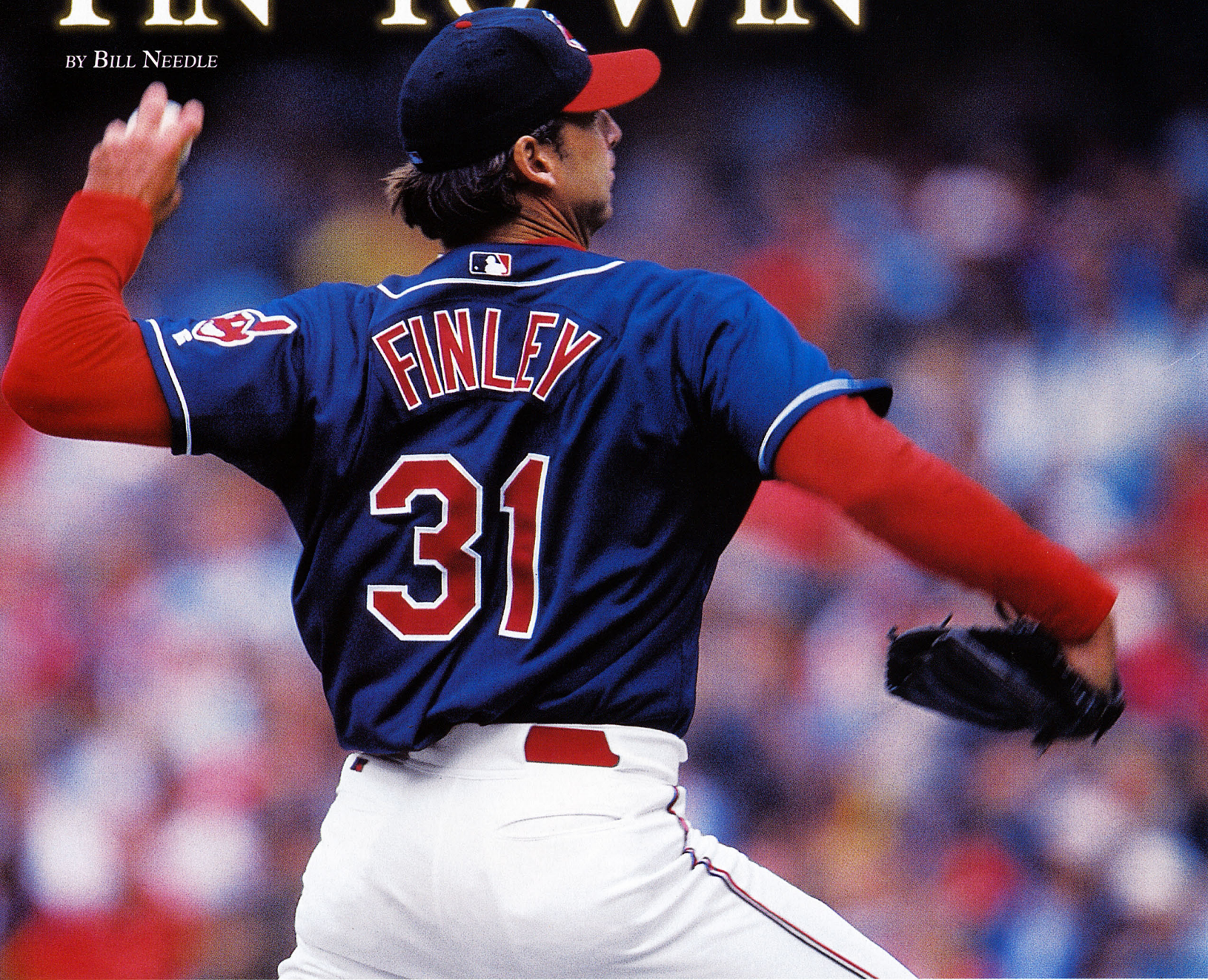


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

By the end of the 2000 season, the Indians and their fans will probably realize the same things people in California knew all along about Chuck Finley.

But now, before anybody in Cleveland has had much opportunity to find out what the Indians prized free agent is all about, most look at the obvious: Finley is 16-9 against the Yankees in his career, pitches about 200 innings per season, throws left-handed, and is married to the actress who played opposite

Tom Hanks in a movie farce filmed before Hanks became famous.

But if you're looking for the real Finley – and can't wait to find out for yourself – ask his former teammates on the Angels, for whom Finley pitched 14 seasons, wearing the halo longer than any player in franchise history. You'll find Chuck Finley is more than just a lefty who can beat the Yankees. The Angels will tell you he was their heart, their soul, their blood, their guts, and

their conscience – through years of frustration, losing, and turmoil.

Or you could ask the SoCal media. They'll tell you he never hid from them. Win or lose, Finley was literally a standup guy, standing up in front of his locker, explaining the good *and* bad with a sense of purpose and a sense of humor.

You could ask Anaheim management, as well, how Finley actually wanted to stay in Anaheim; how his



Louisiana-bred sense of loyalty allowed him to take less money from them as a free agent in 1996 when he could have signed with the Yankees for much more; or how he might even have signed for less this past winter had the Angels been in more of a position to contend in the near future.

It just goes to show, Tribe fans, you think you're getting a desperately-needed lefty starter who can beat the Yanks and you end up getting a whole lot more.

Actually, 37-year-old Charles Edward Finley, of Monroe, Louisiana, almost became an Indian last summer. Cleveland and Anaheim negotiated until the final minutes before the trading deadline last July on a deal that would have sent Finley to the Indians. Newspaper accounts rumored that the Angels demanded infielder Enrique Wilson, pitcher David Riske, and two prospects in exchange for their all-time victory leader, but Indians GM John Hart said, "No."

During the final two months of 1999, Finley went 7-1 with a 2.16 ERA. Shortly thereafter, the Indians World Series hopes exploded due to pitching woes against the Red Sox in the post season.

"I regret we weren't able to get Chuck last July because he might have made the difference for us against Boston," said Hart.

"But now we have him and we still have the four players the Angels wanted."

**"CLEVELAND  
IS THE PLACE WHERE  
I HAVE THE BEST  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
FULFILL MY DREAM  
OF PITCHING IN A  
WORLD SERIES."**

*Chuck Finley*



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Just a few months later, while the 2000 campaign still has that "new car smell," the Tribe has Finley, the young players the Angels wanted, and renewed World Series hopes. Finley has those same post-season dreams, as well. His only playoff experience came in 1986, when he was a 23-year-old rookie.

"Cleveland is the place where I have the best opportunity to fulfill my dream of pitching in a World Series," Finley said during Spring Training.

"I could have spent my whole career with the Angels. But being honest about why I play the game, I knew I had to move."

Finley came close to playoff action during his years with the Angels. In fact, his work in putting his team in a position to challenge for a post-season berth was critical in creating Finley's

reputation as the man the Angels turned to in the clutch. When the Halos found themselves in a must-win game – however infrequent that may have been in Finley's 14 seasons – pregame talk in the clubhouse was usually peppered with the catchphrase, "*Fin' to win.*"

In 1995, while the Indians and their fans were giddy from the excitement that accompanied a pennant-winning, 100-44 season, the Tribe actually lost three of five games to the Angels, who themselves were giving notice to the A.L. West they might be the team to beat. A late-season slump, however, dropped the Angels three games behind Seattle with five games to play.

Finley, knowing his ever-elusive post-season dreams were slipping away, stepped to the mound in the final week



training every day," Finley said. "I played baseball in high school and got some letters from colleges and pro teams my senior year, but I wasn't much of anything. Back then, there wasn't any reason for anyone to think I wouldn't end up working at Daddy's nursery. This baseball career sort of just fell in my lap."

After his year at Tech, Finley dropped out, announcing he was through with college forever. At that point, it's not clear whether the elder Finley saw a baseball future for his son, or simply wanted more for him than his own daily routine of nursery work. Whatever "Big" Chuck Finley's intention, a period of tough love made the younger Finley rethink his decision about college, baseball, and a future in the nursery business.

• "My dad was so mad and disappointed I quit school, all he said was,





'OK, you're coming to work with me.' I cut the [six-acre] front yard with a hand mower. I did stupid things we both knew didn't need to be done – in the hothouses on the hottest days of the [Louisiana] summer."

His father's message clearly understood, Finley returned to college – this time to Northeast Louisiana University (now Louisiana-Monroe) – where he made the baseball team as a walk-on, eventually winning a scholarship.

A 6-7 career record in college left Finley thinking he would soon return to the family nursery. But at the time, the Angels were notorious for drafting physically imposing pitchers and Finley fit the bill. California made him their top pick in the January, 1985 draft. By 1986 – after 28 games and 41 innings in Class A baseball – Finley was a Major

*Finley's professional career in baseball was not foreseen at an early age. In fact, his size – more than his record – seemed to lead to his selection by the Angels.*



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



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Make sure to cast your vote today!



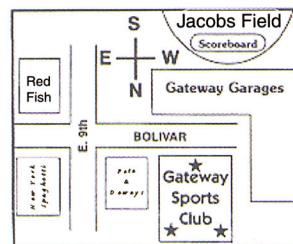
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**"I DREAM EVERY NIGHT ABOUT PITCHING IN THE PLAYOFFS AND GETTING A CHANCE TO GO TO THE WORLD SERIES. I COULDN'T HAVE FOUND A BETTER SITUATION THAN HERE WITH CLEVELAND. IT'S A PERFECT FIT FOR ME."**

***Chuck Finley***

Leaguer – and with the exception of nine innings in 1997 on a rehab assignment for a broken cheekbone, he never left the Angels.

Until this year.

Finley didn't seem to want to leave the Angels after he became a free agent at the end of last season. Whatever his down-home attitudes might be, Southern California can be an attractive place to live if one is well-paid, respected, healthy, a part of the community, and as at home with Gary Busey as with Gary DiSarcina. If one's team has a chance to win the World Series, that is.

The Angels probably won't win the pennant this season which means, had he stayed, no amount of sushi could have filled the void inside Finley that can only be remedied by the chance to throw his splitter in the World Series.

"I dream every night about pitching in the playoffs and getting a chance to go to the World Series," Finley says. "I couldn't have found a better situation than here with Cleveland. It's a perfect fit for me."

Records and statistics mean little to Chuck Finley. He's hidden trophies in his garage after surpassing milestones and can't tell you if he ranks anywhere at all on any of the all-time lists one usually appears on when one has pitched as long as he has.

But there's one milestone more than a few Finley supporters wouldn't mind seeing in 2000. See, back in July of 1997, Finley passed Nolan Ryan to become the winningest pitcher in Angels history. He did so with a three-hit,

nine-strikeout masterpiece against – of all teams – the Indians at Jacobs Field.

Wouldn't it be typical baseball irony – not to mention justice – to have Finley on the mound should the Indians clinch a playoff spot this season? Wouldn't it be fitting to have the pitcher who left Southern California start the game that would put him where he dreams of being – in the playoffs?

You wouldn't have to worry about the outcome, Indians fans. Like they always said in California, "*Fin' to win, man. Fin' to win.*"

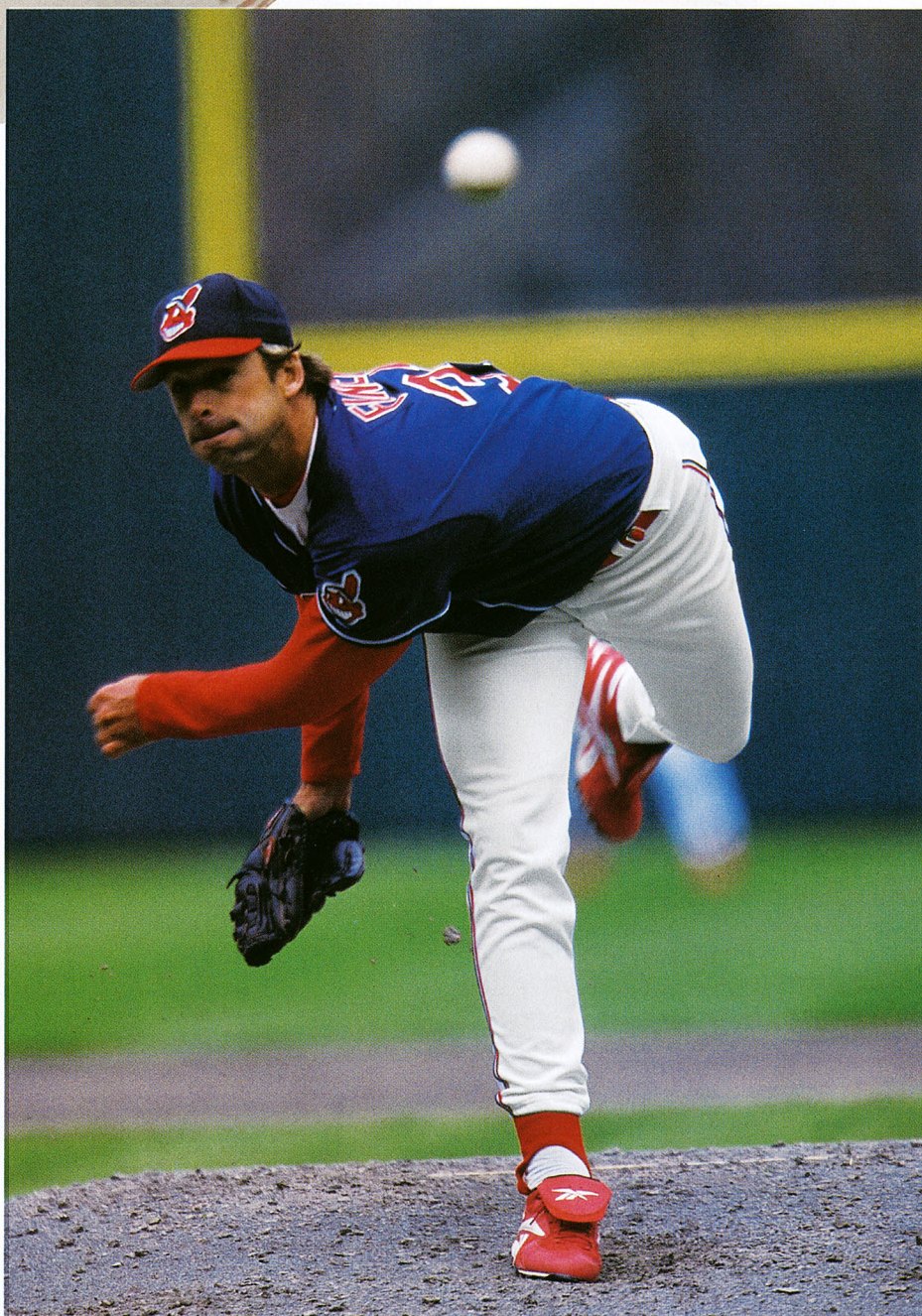


Photo: Gregory Drezdron





Photo: Gregory Drezdson



# little ball

by jim ingraham

Thirty years ago, when Indians manager Charlie Manuel and most of his coaches were still players, Major League Baseball was a far different game than it is now.

Among the things that didn't exist 30 years ago were the designated hitter, free agency, World Series games at night, the Florida Marlins, Colorado Rockies, Arizona Diamondbacks, Tampa Bay Devil Rays, ESPN, wild-

card teams, three divisions in each league, mascots, retractable domes, luxury suites, half the ballparks currently in use in the American League, salary arbitration, \$80 million payrolls, a player hitting 70 home runs in a season, radar guns, dancing ground crews, video replay boards, batting gloves, player agents, and arthroscopic surgery.

And not necessarily in that order.

Among the things that did exist in

Major League Baseball 30 years ago were the Washington Senators, scheduled doubleheaders, hitters who rubbed dirt on their hands, baggy uniforms without the players' names on the back, Ladies Day, players who had to get real jobs in the off season, lead bats, drinking fountains in the dugouts, newspaper photographers on the field during the games, umpires wearing white shirts and ties, Coco Laboy, Tito Fuentes, and Minnie Mendoza.

And, oh yeah, one other thing.

"Little Ball."

You don't hear as much about little ball today. Shrinking ballparks and strike zones coupled with the enormous

size of many players and their equally prodigious contracts have changed the game.

But little ball is still around. It will always be around, as long as baseball is played. It's not used as much now, especially in the American League where the designated hitter rule has changed so much of the fabric of the game.

But it's still a part of baseball. And, although it may only be a rumor or not known at all to many of the younger players of today, it is still a very real concept to those who were brought up in an era when the emphasis was on little ball, and not on the *smash mouth* baseball that we see so much of today.

And every once in a while, if you're lucky, you'll see little ball rear its ancient little head in the middle of a game. And more often than not, little ball, executed properly, will help one of the teams win the game.

The headlines in the newspaper the next day won't always announce it, because little ball isn't real glamorous. It is pure baseball, however. Just ask those that remember it best.

"When someone says little ball to me, I think of hitting behind the runner, going from first to third on base hits, bunting, and stealing bases," said Manuel. "Little ball is all of that."

And more.

If you wanted to get right down to it, little ball is frequently everything before and after the home run. Everyone remembers the home run, and many forget the little ball that came before and after it.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

*Charlie Manuel (pictured left) has three veterans – including Kenny Lofton (pictured right) – who can assist in teaching the team's youngest members the art of little ball.*



"Little ball is playing for one run, instead of the big inning," Manuel said. "It's the way you manufacture a run, so you don't always have to depend on the home run."

The best time to see little ball today is when the other team's pitcher is so good that it's unlikely he will give up more than one or two runs in a game.

"When you're facing a good pitcher like Pedro Martinez, that's when you see it," said Manuel. "Against pitchers like Martinez or Roger Clemens, you've got to play it one run at a time, and every run is so important, because you

know that pitcher isn't going to give up many."

Those types of games, however, occur more in the National League than the American League.

"The American League is a three-run homer league," said Manuel. It's been that way since the league adopted the designated hitter rule nearly 30 years ago.

The designated hitter rule dramatically changed the way the game is played in the American

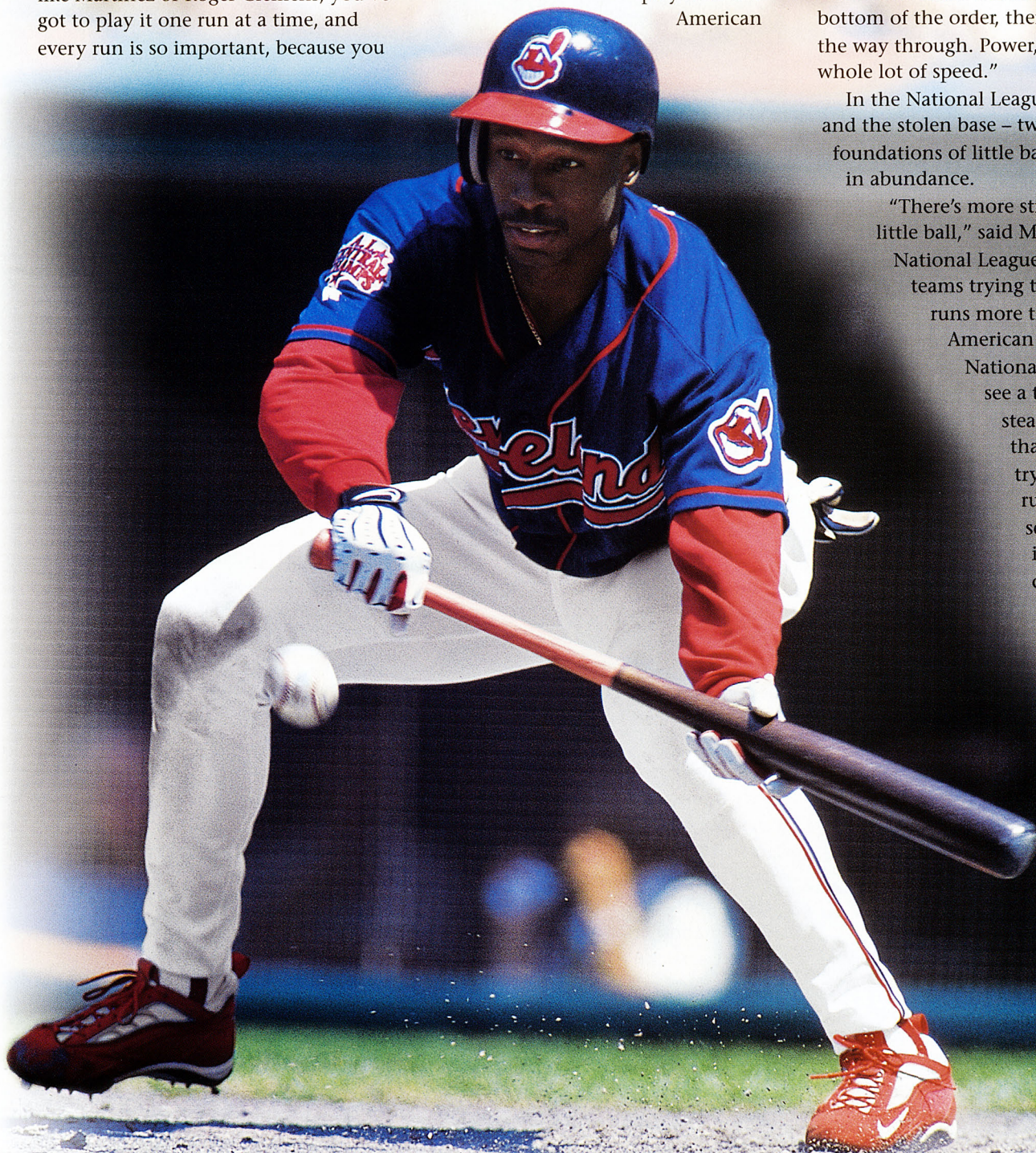
League. Since the advent of the DH, the American League has been characterized by long games, lots of home runs, lots of runs, and frustrated pitchers.

That's what happens when a rule is changed that takes the worst hitter – the pitcher – out of the team's lineup and replaces him with a designated hitter who in many cases is the best hitter on that team.

"You look at all the American League lineups now," said Manuel, "and from about the third spot to the bottom of the order, there is power all the way through. Power, but not a whole lot of speed."

In the National League, speed and the stolen base – two of the foundations of little ball – are still in abundance.

"There's more strategy with little ball," said Manuel. "In the National League you'll see teams trying to manufacture runs more than in the American League. In the National League you'll see a team try to steal third with less than two outs to try to set up a run. You don't see that much in the American League."





That's not to say that little ball fails to come into play during the course of American League games. It frequently does.

And three of the best practitioners of little ball sit in the first three slots of the Indians batting order: Kenny Lofton, Omar Vizquel, and Roberto Alomar.

"All three of those guys are very good at little ball," said Manuel. "Because they all can handle the bat. I remember a game last year where in one inning all three of them bunted for hits, right in a row. I don't think I've ever seen that before."

The bunt.

It's still one of the most discussed strategic ploys in baseball. When should a manager order a sacrifice bunt? When shouldn't he? How about a squeeze bunt? When is the best time to do that? Suicide squeeze or safety squeeze? For hardcore baseball fans the debates are endless *and* interesting.

And it's all little ball.

Most baseball people will tell you that bunting is becoming a lost art, and the statistics back them up.

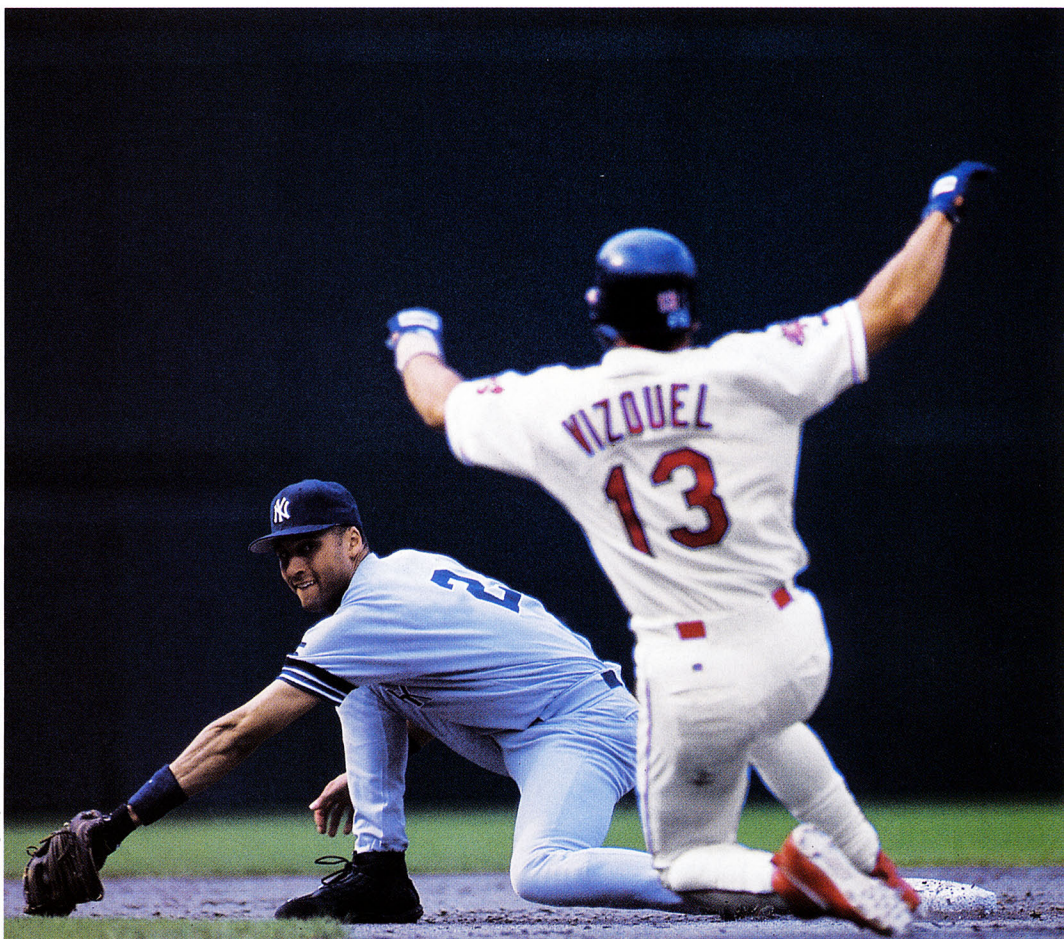
Consider: in 1999 Vizquel led all American League players in sacrifice bunts with 17. In 1907, another Indians infielder, third baseman Bill Bradley, led the American League and set a Major League record for most sacrifice bunts in a season: 46.

**"I DON'T KNOW  
IF THE PLAYERS  
TODAY ARE ANY  
BETTER OR WORSE  
AT BUNTING..."**

**Ted Uhlaender**

"I'd say the bunters were definitely better when I played," said Manuel, who was an outfielder for the Twins and Dodgers from 1969-75. "A lot of guys back then were very good bunters. Today, there aren't that many good bunters."

Photo: Gregory Drezdson



The method of bunting has even changed.

"When I was playing and guys sacrifice bunted, they got the ball down and didn't worry about anything else," said Manuel. "Today when guys sacrifice bunt, they push it or drag the bunt, trying to get a base hit out of it. It seems like we've gotten away from the art of giving yourself up to advance the runner. They have a different technique now."

In many cases, it's difficult to even get a player to take an interest in bunting, much less practice the correct fundamentals for the task.

"Part of it is that players aren't taught the right way to do it," said Manuel. "But another part of it is, with the big contracts and all the money flying around now, guys don't want to bunt."

Indians first base coach Ted Uhlaender was a teammate of Manuel's on the Minnesota Twins. Manuel says Uhlaender was one of the best bat handlers (i.e. little ball practitioners) of his era. However, like so many players

*Indians shortstop Omar Vizquel runs the bases as well as he handles a bat. Vizquel led the American League in sacrifice bunts in 1999.*

from the past, Uhlaender doesn't immediately embrace the notion that the game was better when he played. Heck, Uhlaender isn't even sure the bunting was better when he played.

"I don't know if the players today are any better or worse at bunting than they were when I played," said Uhlaender. "That's because everyone's mindset is completely different today. When I played, numbers weren't as important as they are now."

Uhlaender points to one very obvious factor that has changed how players look at what they are asked to do on the baseball field.

"Back then guys were making \$20,000 a year, and there wasn't the big jump in salaries that there is now," he said. "Guys looked at it differently. I mean, if someone says to you if you can hit 40 home runs, your salary will jump from \$200,000 to \$1 million,



chances are the player is going to start trying to hit home runs. That sort of thing didn't enter into it when I played."

Indeed, there isn't much glamour in little ball. Players don't get huge raises for leading the league in sacrifice bunts, like Vizquel did last year, or in sacrifice flies, as Alomar did. It's the home run hitters who get the big money and the big headlines.

The big contracts and big money have clearly been negative influences on the team concept that is the basis for little ball. That concept was much more in vogue 30 years ago.

"When I was with the Twins, Billy Martin was the manager," Uhlaender

said. "Back then Billy would tell you if you moved the runners, bunted when you were supposed to, and did all the little things that, when contract time came up, you would be taken care of because, he said, 'We know you know how to play the game.'"

Thirty years later, all that has changed.

"I think players now *can* do all the little ball stuff," said Uhlaender. "But today it's a numbers game. People pay on numbers. I was good at all that little ball stuff when I was a player, but if I was playing now and making \$4 mil-

*Robbie Alomar completes the Indians 1-2-3 little-ball lineup.*

lion instead of \$20,000, I might look at it differently, too."

At the grass roots level, baseball tries to instill the importance of fundamentals on its players. But even then, it takes a back seat.

## **"TEACHING THE FUNDAMENTALS IS THE CORNERSTONE OF WHAT WE DO IN PLAYER DEVELOPMENT." Neal Huntington**

"I would say when players are being scouted, fundamentals do not enter into it a lot," said Tribe farm director Neal Huntington. "If you've got an 18-year-old kid with raw tools, but his fundamentals aren't good, he's still going to get drafted because teams always feel they can teach the fundamentals."

Once the players get into the organization, an awareness of the importance of learning fundamentals begins almost immediately.

"Teaching the fundamentals is the cornerstone of what we do in player development," said Huntington. "Almost all of our time in Spring Training is spent teaching fundamentals."

At every point in a player's development, his mastery of fundamentals has an impact. Talent is still a key, of course. Just because a player is a whiz at the fundamentals of the game, doesn't mean he will get a free ride to the big leagues.

"The best players are the ones who have the highest combination of talent and fundamentals," said Huntington. "The next tier of players are those with less talent, but they play the game the right way, or players who have more talent, but aren't fundamentally sound."

*continued, see Little Ball, page 56*

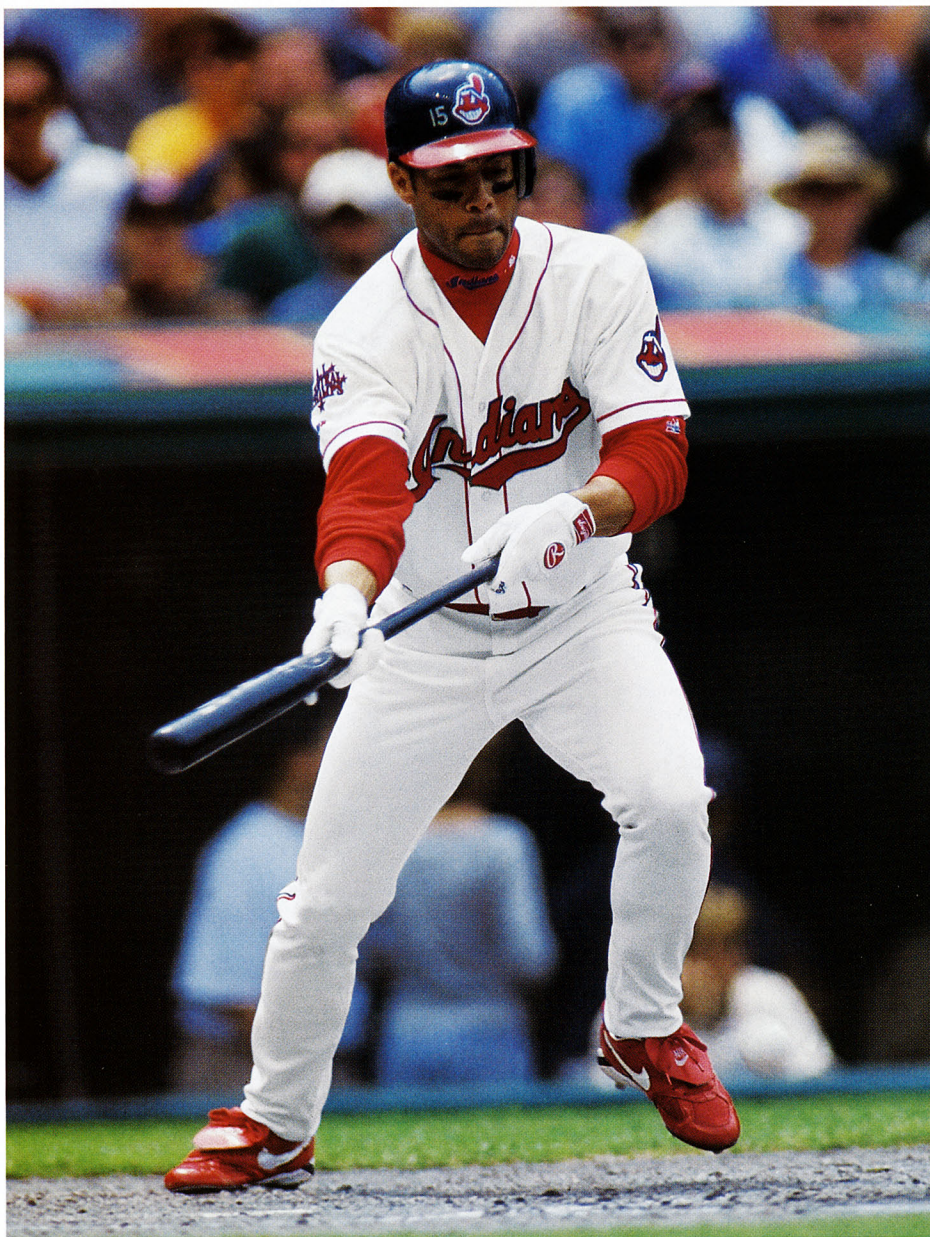


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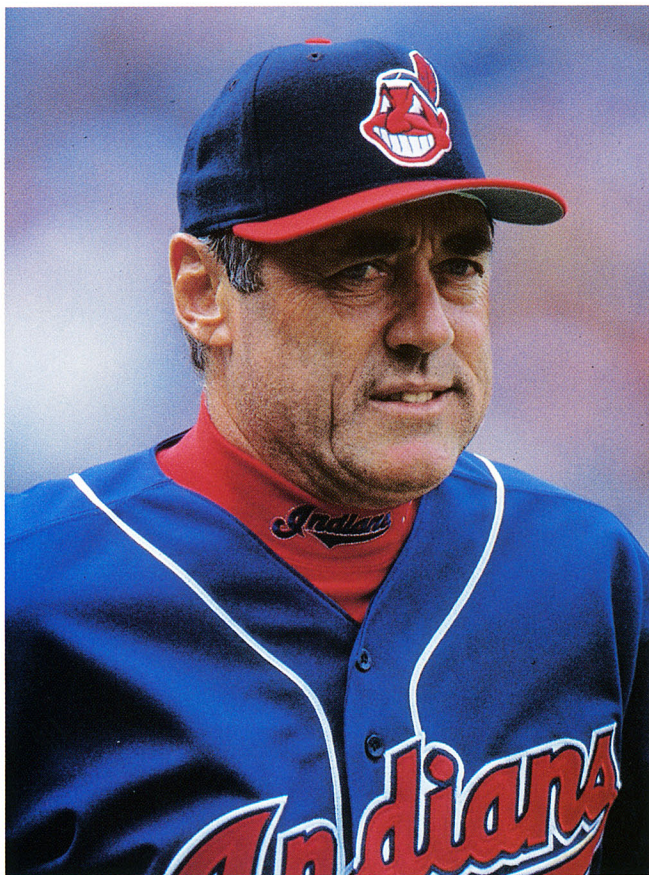


Photo: Gregory Drezdron

an entire season. The Indians haven't had a straight steal of home in a regular season game since April 26, 1992, when Lofton did it.

Uhlaender is one of only six players in Twins history to execute a straight steal of home. He did it on August 3, 1966, against Boston, with lefthander Dick Stigman pitching.

"Billy Martin was the third base coach," said Uhlaender. "There was no sign. He just said to me, 'Do you think you can make it?' I said, 'Yeah,' and he said, 'Well, go on.'"

In 1969, Uhlaender and Manuel were teammates on the Twins when Rod Carew stole home three times in one season. In fact, Carew did it twice in 10 days and three times in the span of five weeks (April 9, April 19, and May 18).

The third base coach for the Twins then was Johnny Goryl, former Tribe coach and currently the Indians Minor League defensive coordinator.

"I didn't know when Carew was trying any of those steals," said Goryl. "He just took off, without telling anyone. Not even the hitter knew. One time I remember Harmon Killebrew swung at a pitch as Carew was stealing home."

And that led to the following couplet, uttered or penned by some anonymous author of the day, who clearly had an appreciation for little ball, no matter what the consequences:

"Here lies Rod Carew, lined to left  
by Killebrew."

*While playing for the Twins, Tribe coach Ted Uhlaender (who also played for the Indians) successfully executed a straight steal of home plate.*

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# An Ace in the Making

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Photo: Gregory Drezdson

BY STEVE HERRICK

**"HE HAS A CHANCE  
TO BECOME ONE OF  
THE GAME'S ELITE  
PITCHERS."**

*John Hart*

The ace pitcher. It's something the Indians have been trying to find for nearly 30 years. The last Indians pitcher who could truly be called an ace was Gaylord Perry, who pitched for the Tribe from 1972 through 1975. Perry was the last Indians pitcher to win the Cy Young Award and that came way back in 1972.

It's been a long wait. Even as the Indians have rolled to five straight American League Central Division titles, the one thing they have lacked is the ace starter who can go to the mound and dominate a game.

The wait might finally be over. A lot of people think Bartolo Colon is ready to not only become the ace on the Indians staff, but also one of the dominant starting pitchers in the American League. And there's no reason to think that can't happen this season. The

righthander turns 25 this month, consistently throws in the high 90s, and has even hit 100 mph on the radar gun. Colon also is developing some off-speed pitches to go along with his hard stuff and keep hitters off-balance.

That's quite a package, which is good news for the Indians. And bad news for opposing hitters around the league.

"He has a chance to become one of the game's elite pitchers," says general manager John Hart.

Dick Pole, who's in his first season as the Tribe's pitching coach, knows all about Colon. Pole was the bullpen coach for the Boston Red Sox in 1998 and the pitching coach for the Anaheim Angels last season. He's glad Colon is on his side this season.

"Unfortunately, I've had to watch him from the other side of the field," says Pole.



"Besides just good stuff, he has a good presence on the mound. He looks like he has matured a little more each year."

Pole, who pitched in the big leagues from 1973 through 1978, thinks there's no doubt Colon can be an ace.

"Bartolo has the stuff to be that," he says. "He had a heck of a year last season. He had 18 wins. With a little luck here or there, he might have had 20. He's matured a lot."

Colon finished 1999 with an 18-5 record and a 3.95 ERA. The 18 wins

were the most by an Indians pitcher since Greg Swindell won 18 in 1988.

Colon also was second in the league in wins and was one of seven starting pitchers in the league to have an ERA under 4.00.

Pole hopes Colon elevates his game to the level where opposing teams won't look forward to the matchup. It's the same feeling teams get now when going against aces like Pedro Martinez and Randy Johnson, where opposing hitters would just as soon call in sick.

"What you hope will happen is, the other clubs will see that you're pitching and they'll say, 'Oh no, Colon's pitching today,'" says Pole. "When other clubs see that you're pitching, they're not happy. You don't want it to be a pleasant experience for them."

Some opponents have already found that out about Colon. On July 20 of last season, he held the Houston Astros to five hits in a 7-1 Tribe victory.

Following the game, Astros second baseman Craig Biggio said, "Everybody



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



talks about how they need a No. 1 starter. To me, they already have one."

Colon's maturity will make rookie manager Charlie Manuel's transition to his new job a lot easier.

"I think he definitely can be one of those guys who can be a dominant pitcher," says Manuel.

It's a role Colon thinks he's ready to handle.

"The No. 1 guy is, basically, the top guy," he says. "If you're in the Major Leagues, you want that spot. I'm more prepared this year than I've ever been. I feel I'm at the top of my game."

The numbers certainly back up these expectations. Over the last two seasons, Colon is 32-14 with a 3.83 ERA. Opposing batters hit .242 against him last season, the fourth-best mark in the league. Only Martinez, the best pitcher in baseball and Colon's idol and fellow native of the Dominican Republic, won more games (22).

Colon got better as last season went on. Over his last 19 starts he was 12-2, with a 2.98 ERA. Opposing hitters batted .212 against him over the second half of the season. The Indians were 21-11 in his 32 starts.

**"THE NO. 1 GUY IS,  
BASICALLY, THE TOP  
GUY. IF YOU'RE IN  
THE MAJOR  
LEAGUES, YOU  
WANT THAT SPOT."**

**Bartolo Colon**

"He has a great fastball, but he's also worked on his changeup and his breaking ball," says Pole. "You usually don't see that kind of stuff and good command in someone that young. He's grown into a solid pitcher."

"He has a three-pitch mix that is deadly," says Indians assistant general manager Mark Shapiro.



Photo: Gregory Drezzon

Colon also has proven he can handle a heavy workload. He has pitched 204 and 205 innings the last two seasons.

"I'm going into this year prepared to handle a lot of innings," he says.

In just his second full season in the big leagues, Colon was fourth in American League Cy Young Award balloting behind Martinez, Baltimore's Mike Mussina, and New York's Mariano Rivera. He was also named to the American League All-Star team.

The need for an ace starter always comes around at playoff time. Colon pitched like an ace in Game 1 of last season's Division Series against Boston.

*The Tribe's pitching coach, Dick Pole, believes Colon has "good stuff" and has added maturity each year he's been in the Majors.*

Pitted against Martinez, he struck out 11 in eight innings and left with the game tied 2-2. The Indians eventually won 3-2.

Unfortunately for the Indians, Colon didn't have the same success later in the series. Pitching on three days rest for the first time in his career in Game 4, he allowed seven runs on six hits in one inning in a 23-7 loss.

"I wasn't tired, but my fastball wasn't there," says Colon. "I'm not used to pitching on a lack of rest."



Of course, Colon will likely be faced with going on short rest again in the playoffs sometime in his career. That's a role all true aces have to accept.

"If it happens again, I'll know what to expect," says Colon. "I'll know what I have to do to get ready for it, and I'll be better prepared."

Indians bullpen coach Luis Isaac has worked closely with Colon since the pitcher first came to the Indians in 1997.

"When he matures as a pitcher, he's going to be able to pitch in that situation," says Isaac. "You saw what Pedro did to us in Game 5 when he came out of the bullpen. He didn't have his best stuff, but he was able to fool the hitters with off-speed stuff. Bartolo will be able to do the same thing."

"Bartolo pitches well in big games," says Tribe catcher Sandy Alomar. "To judge him on the one playoff game is

*Veteran catcher Sandy Alomar gives Colon high marks for his pitching performances in big games.*

unfair. He was pitching on three days rest, and he had never done that before. It was different for him. Before that, he had always pitched well in big games."

Isaac works with Colon on his pitching and serves as a mentor of sorts off the field. He serves as an interpreter for Colon when the pitcher talks to the media after games.

"He talks to me a lot, and he talks to the pitching coaches a lot," says Isaac. "He's real coachable. That's a big thing with him. He's got a good idea what he's doing. I think he's going to blossom."

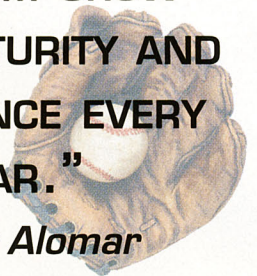
Colon enjoys going head-to-head with Martinez and says he tries to elevate his game against him.

"I remember a game in Boston two years ago," says Pole. "He matched Pedro pitch for pitch. Midre Cummings hit a home run for the Red Sox and they won 1-0. It was a great duel to watch."

How good has Colon become? There are times when his fielders nearly doze off when he's on the mound.

**"HE'S DOING BETTER EVERY YEAR. HE'S ONLY BEEN HERE THREE YEARS. I'VE SEEN HIM GROW WITH MATURITY AND CONFIDENCE EVERY YEAR."**

***Sandy Alomar***



"It's so boring when Bartolo pitches," says shortstop Omar Vizquel. "Everything is either a strikeout or a fly ball."

"He's our horse," says first baseman Jim Thome.

Alomar has also worked closely with Colon and says he hasn't seen anyone with this type of potential.

"He's doing better every year," says Alomar. "He's only been here three years. I've seen him grow with maturity and confidence every year."

Shapiro was the Tribe's director of Minor League operations from 1994 through 1998 and saw Colon pitch several times in the Minor Leagues after the Indians signed him as a free agent in 1993. Since Colon wasn't taken in that year's draft, his signing didn't generate a lot of news. Winston Llenas, the Tribe's scout in the Dominican Republic, signed Colon.

"He wasn't a high-profile, big-signing guy," says Shapiro.

It didn't take long for Shapiro to discover the Indians had something different in Colon, who threw especially hard for someone who was only six feet tall.

"I saw his first professional appearance," he says. "I could tell right away that Bartolo was one of those guys, who, it was like he was throwing different from everyone else. The ball just jumped out of his hand. I knew he had a chance to be a special guy. He wasn't big, but he had a big fastball."



Photo: Gregory Drezdzon



Colon was 6-1 with a 2.59 ERA in the Dominican League in 1993. His best Minor League season came in 1995 when he was 13-3 with a 1.96 ERA for Class A Kinston. He pitched a no-hitter for Class AAA Buffalo in 1997 and spent part of the season with the Indians, going 4-7 with a 5.65 ERA.

Colon made the Indians pitching staff in Spring Training the next season and has been in the rotation ever since. He was 14-9 with a 3.71 ERA in 1998.

Along with having the ability to be an ace, a pitcher must have a certain mentality.

"The thing about being a No. 1 starter is that mentally you've got to accept the fact that you are going to be

matched against the best pitcher on the other team in a lot of your starts," says Pole.

Jim Riggleman is in his first season as the Tribe's third-base coach. As manager of the Chicago Cubs, he saw Kerry Wood develop into an ace in his rookie season in 1998 before hurting his arm last year.

"I think Bartolo can definitely be a No. 1, but a lot still needs to happen," Riggleman said. "He has to stay healthy and develop his pitches. The challenge isn't as much becoming a No. 1, as it is staying there for several years after that."

"I think you haven't established yourself as a true frontline performer unless you've done it three or four

**"IT'S SO BORING  
WHEN BARTOLO  
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EVERYTHING IS  
EITHER A STRIKEOUT  
OR A FLY BALL."  
Omar Vizquel**

**"...HIS CONTROL  
IS GETTING BETTER  
AND BETTER."  
Jim Thome**

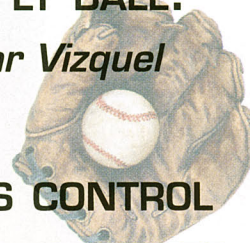


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

years in a row, but he's obviously our guy," says Hart.

There's no doubt Colon's best days are ahead.

"I feel more relaxed now," he says. "I know the players around the league a lot better."

"Just wait until Bartolo figures out how good he really is," says Vizquel. "Sometimes, he has great stuff, and he's in the dugout saying, 'I don't have anything.' I tell him, 'Just throw the ball.'"

"The biggest thing about Bart is that his control is getting better and better," says Thome. "He puts the ball about where he wants it. He doesn't throw it down the middle very often."

Colon's weight became an issue in Spring Training when he reported to camp at 242 pounds, which is about 10 pounds heavier than last season.

"Bartolo is aware his weight is something we'll want him to pay attention to," Hart says. "We don't want him to get any bigger, but his body type is what you want for a power pitcher. He has strong legs, a strong back, trunk, and shoulders. He's a big man."

Considering Colon's ability and what he has already accomplished, he has a chance to be a *big man* for the Indians for a long time.



# INSIDE THE NUMBERS

0.54 5.01 2.53 4.37 1.62  
**ERA FIGURES CAN BE DECEIVING . . .**

by Steve Fall

Chuck Finley pitched in the American League Championship Series in his rookie season – that was 1986. He worked a total of two relief innings in three appearances. He's been waiting ever since for his next taste of post-season baseball.

Finley's impressive resume included 165 career wins and a 3.72 ERA entering this season.

"Chuck brings ace credentials," said John Hart in an interview with *Sports Illustrated*. "Big innings, experience, quality stuff, quality numbers."

How much does the addition of Finley upgrade the rotation? How does the overall pitching staff now stack up with the top staffs in the American League?

Before we can adequately evaluate this year's staff with Finley, let's first determine the state of the Tribe's pitching before he arrived.

Last season, the Indians ranked sixth in the A.L. in earned run average (4.89). The team that knocked them out of the playoffs and the defending World Champions ranked one and two in the league. The Red Sox led the way with a 4.00 mark, and the Yankees were a short distance back at 4.13.

It appears that the Indians pitchers have some serious ground to make up to get to the same level as these clubs. However, this may not be the case.

Here are the A.L. ERA rankings from last season in road games only. Road statistics are often more indicative of actual performance because they are not impacted by the biases of the teams' home ballparks.

## 1999 Road ERA

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Boston      | 4.23 |
| Cleveland   | 4.70 |
| Toronto     | 4.77 |
| Anaheim     | 4.78 |
| Baltimore   | 4.85 |
| New York    | 4.85 |
| Tampa Bay   | 4.86 |
| Texas       | 4.94 |
| Minnesota   | 4.95 |
| Chicago     | 5.05 |
| Oakland     | 5.09 |
| Seattle     | 5.18 |
| Detroit     | 5.27 |
| Kansas City | 5.60 |

What's going on here? The Indians rank second in road ERA, trailing only the Red Sox.

The Tribe leads the Yankees in this category! How could this be possible? After all, the Yankees have won back-to-back World Series with their outstanding staff. The Yankees overall 1999 team ERA was .76 points lower than the Indians ERA. As you can see below, the big difference came from their home figures.

## 1999 Home/Road ERA

|         | Home | Road | Overall |
|---------|------|------|---------|
| Indians | 5.08 | 4.70 | 4.89    |
| Yankees | 3.45 | 4.85 | 4.13    |

While the Indians have the edge on the road, the difference at home is huge. The Yankees' home ERA is 1.63 runs lower.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Indian newcomer Chuck Finley, pictured above, came to Cleveland with a 3.72 ERA.

The explanation for this is simple. The Yankees play in a great pitchers' park. Meanwhile, Jacobs Field is a much tougher park for pitchers. The Yankees will almost always have a lower home ERA than the Indians, even if the Indians have better pitchers. Because they play half their games at Yankee Stadium, the Yankees overall ERA will nearly always be lower than the Indians ERA.



How difficult can Jacobs Field be for pitchers? There were 219 homers hit there last season by the Indians and their opponents, compared to just 158 in Yankee Stadium. Of course, because of the Indians sluggers, you would expect there to be more homers in their home ballpark. But there is a way to determine the effect of the park itself.

The Indians and their opponents hit 187 home runs on the road. There were 32 more homers blasted at Jacobs Field (an increase of 17 percent). When you compare home statistics to road statistics, you're left with the effect of the park itself. Each team plays 81 games apiece, at home and away, against nearly the same set of teams (except for a few interleague games). Therefore, you are comparing basically the same groups of players. Disparities in statistics can thus be attributed to the ballpark.

Using the same method, Yankee Stadium decreased home runs by 18 percent.

Here's an example of how the parks affect individual pitchers. Bartolo Colon's 1999 numbers match up well with the overall stats of both Orlando Hernandez and David Cone.

### 1999 Overall Statistics

|                | ERA  | W-L  |
|----------------|------|------|
| Colon, Cle.    | 3.95 | 18-5 |
| Hernandez, NYY | 4.12 | 17-9 |
| Cone, NYY      | 3.44 | 12-9 |

Colon's numbers are right in line with the two Yankees aces. However, Hernandez and Cone have a huge advantage because of their home park. Therefore, let's take a look at their 1999 road stats only.

### 1999 Road Statistics

| ERA            | W-L       |
|----------------|-----------|
| Colon, Clev.   | 3.78 9-3  |
| Hernandez, NYY | 4.24 10-5 |
| Cone, NYY      | 5.24 6-4  |

Colon performed better away from home than the Yankees hurlers. His ERA was nearly a run and a half lower than Cone's! Though Hernandez fared better than Cone, Colon's ERA was still about half a run lower.

Hernandez was the only Yankees starter with a road ERA below 5.00 last season. On the other hand, just one current Indians starter, Jaret Wright, exceeded this figure a year ago.

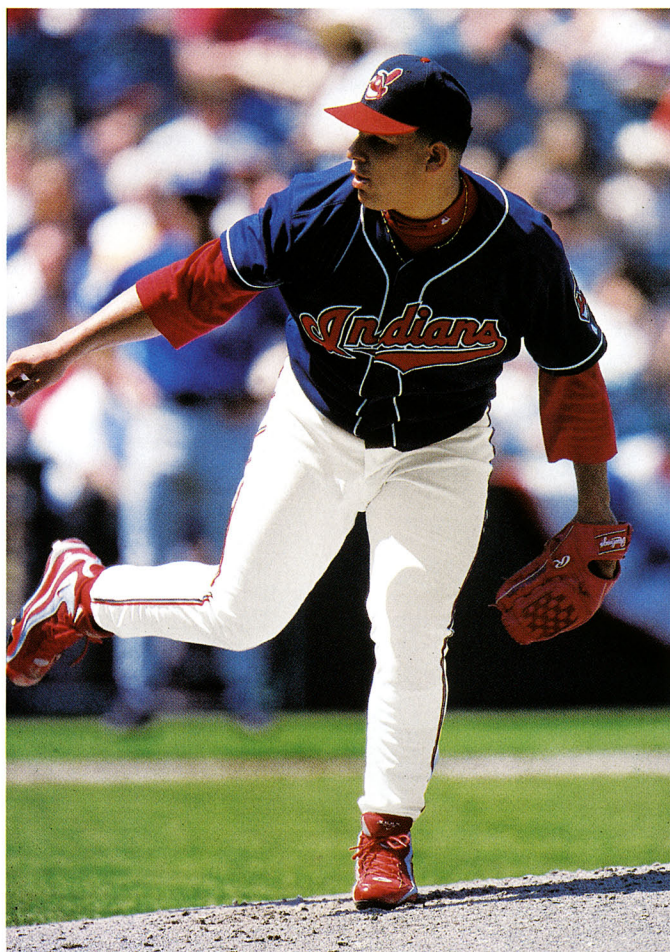


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

*In 2000, the Indians hope for a stellar season from their young, hard throwers, Jaret Wright (below) and Bartolo Colon (above).*

Here is how their present starting rotations compare in terms of 1999 road earned run averages. Finley, of course, was with the Angels last season. Ramiro Mendoza is included because he's been moved into the Yankees rotation, but he worked almost exclusively out of the bullpen last year.

### 1999 Road ERA

| Indians |      | Yankees   |      |
|---------|------|-----------|------|
| Colon   | 3.78 | Hernandez | 4.24 |
| Finley  | 4.32 | Cone      | 5.24 |
| Burba   | 4.47 | Clemens   | 6.20 |
| Nagy    | 4.95 | Pettitte  | 5.24 |
| Wright  | 6.19 | Mendoza   | 3.96 |

The Indians starter has a lower road ERA in four of the five comparisons! In some cases, the Tribe's advantage is substantial. Finley's road ERA was

*continued, see Inside the Numbers, page 88*



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



Anniversaries ● Bar & Bat Mitzvahs  
 Bachelorette Parties ● Birthdays  
 Charitable & Fund Raising Events  
 Commercial Events  
 Corporate Picnics & Events  
 Family Reunions  
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**(216) 420-4435.***

# SLIDER

## Slippin' n Slidin' around TOWN

Year-Round



Photo: Gregory Drezdron

January

February

March

April

May

June

October

November

July

August

September

December



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- 1997 All-Star MVP Sandy Alomar, Jr.
- Starting pitchers Bartolo Colon, Charles Nagy, and Dave Burba
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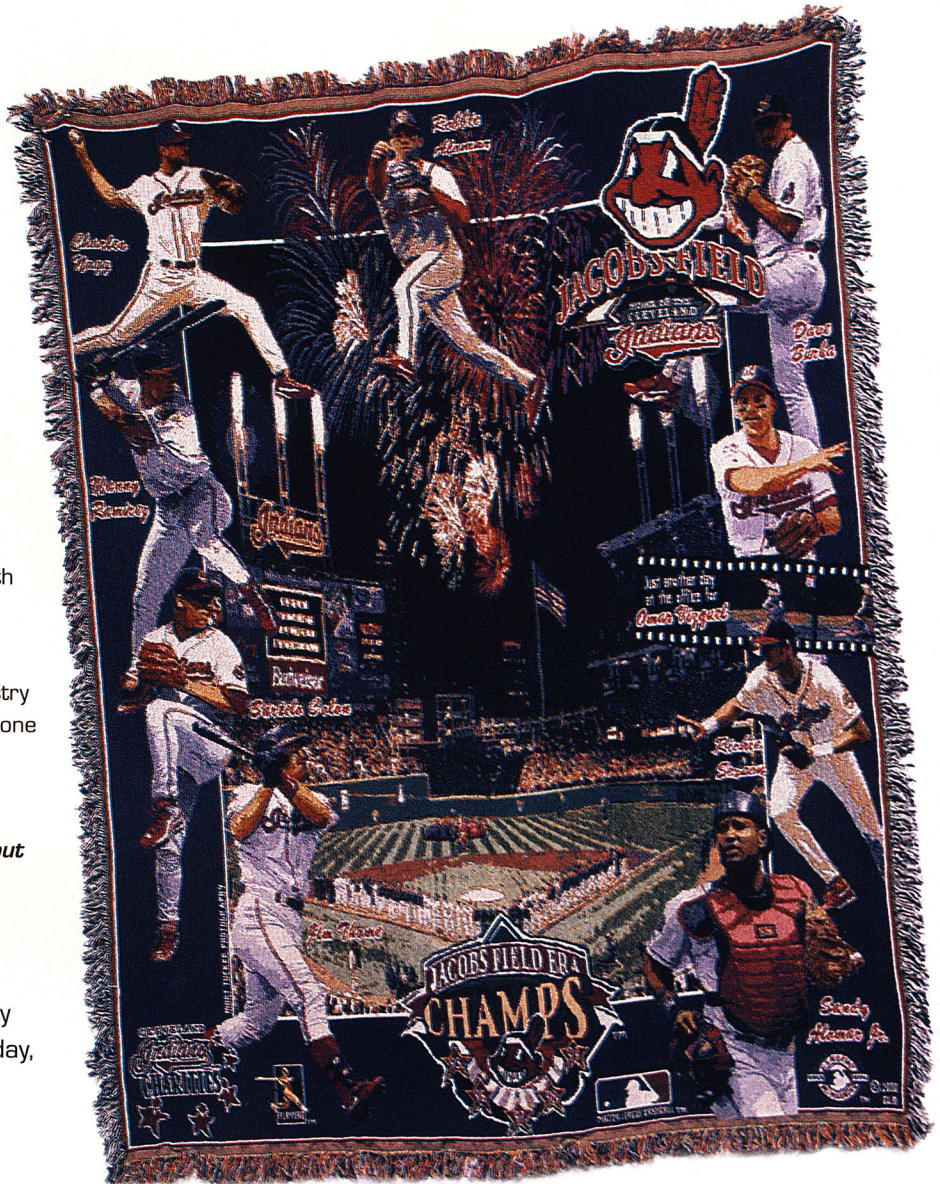
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All player photos by: Gregory Drezdson



# INSIDE THE NUMBERS

continued from page 70

nearly a run lower than Cone's mark. Dave Burba's ERA was 1.73 runs less than Roger Clemens' figure.

This doesn't mean that Burba's a better pitcher than Clemens. Starting pitchers may only make 13 or 14 away starts in a season. One or two bad outings can destroy their road ERA. However, when an entire staff's road ERA is better over the course of a season, that does mean something.

The starters weren't the only ones to fare better on the road than at Jacobs Field. Ricardo Rincon had a 3.20 road ERA and a 5.40 mark at home. Paul Shuey was also much tougher to score against in away games (2.43). At home, his mark was two runs higher (4.43).

Most experts would say that the Indians have reached the post season because of their offense. While the offense has been outstanding, Indians pitchers have been solid during most of their run of five straight Central Division titles. They ranked near the top of the A.L. in road ERA in four of these five seasons.

This all means that the Indians pitching staff has been much better than people realize in recent seasons. And now one of the game's top lefties has been added to this group.

"I think Chuck Finley gives us a different look," said Charlie Manuel to *Sportsline.com*. "He's the first lefty (starter) we've had in quite a while."

Manuel is understating things a bit. The last lefthander to start at least 20 games for the Tribe was Dennis Cook in 1992.

Wright is another key. He appears ready to make up for a disappointing 1999 season.

"Jaret worked out all winter and came to camp in real good shape," said Manuel.



Photo: Gregory Drezzdon

Relievers Ricardo Rincon (above), Paul Shuey (left), and Steve Karsay (below) will be key factors in the Indians level of success this season.

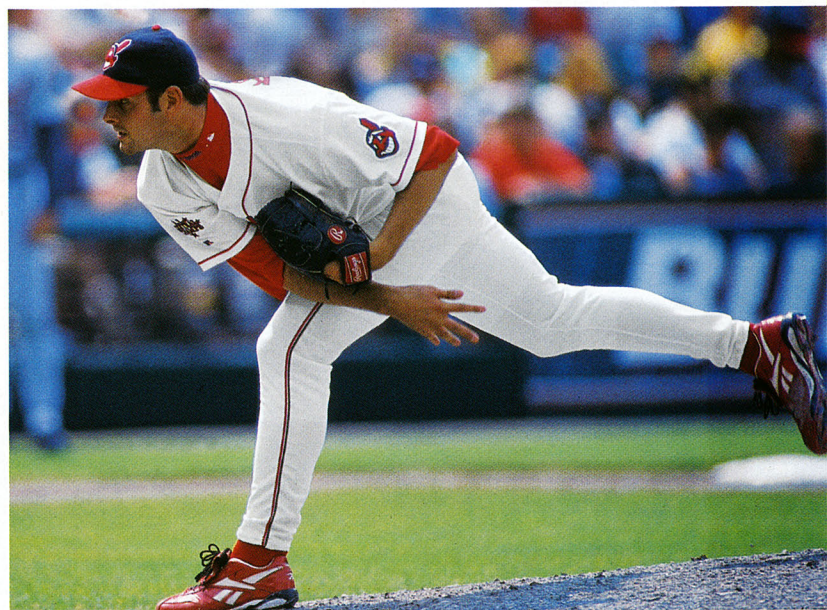


Photo: Gregory Drezzdon

The hard work may pay off. Wright started the season extremely well. After allowing just two earned runs in his first start, he shut out the A's in a complete game five-hitter in his next outing.

The performance of relievers like Rincon, Shuey, and Steve Karsay is also critical. The bullpen should also benefit from the presence of veterans like Scott Kamieniecki and Bobby Witt.

This season, the Indians staff has a chance to be very good. They weren't as far away from that level in 1999 as some thought.

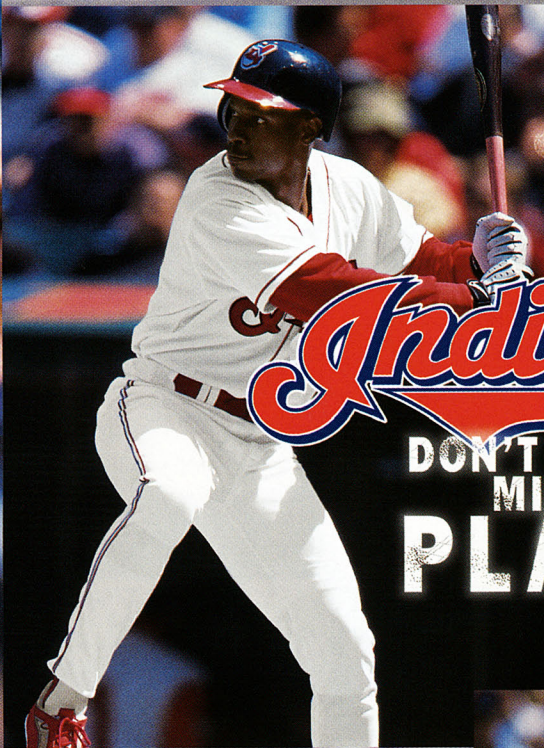


Photo: Gregory Drezzdon









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# THE CLEVELAND INDIANS



**Scott  
KAMIENIECKI** 30

Age: 35, born April 19, 1964  
in Mt. Clemens, MI

Position: Pitcher

B/T: R/R Ht: 6'0" Wt: 200



**Steve  
KARSAY** 20

Age: 28, born March 24, 1972  
in Flushing, NY

Position: Pitcher

B/T: R/R Ht: 6'3" Wt: 209

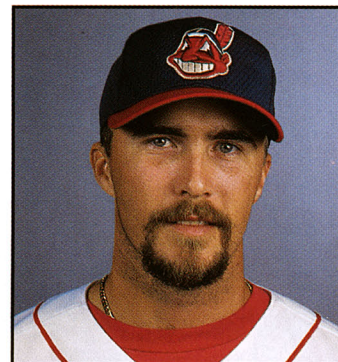


**Kenny  
LOFTON** *Disabled List* 7

Age: 32, born May 31, 1967  
in East Chicago, IN

Position: Outfielder

B/T: L/L Ht: 6'0" Wt: 180



**Tom  
MARTIN** 36

Age: 29, born May 21, 1970  
in Charleston, SC

Position: Pitcher

B/T: L/L Ht: 6'1" Wt: 200

## OUR *DYNAMIC* DUO



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



**Charles  
NAGY** 41

Age: 32, born May 5, 1967  
in Fairfield, CT

Position: Pitcher

B/T: L/R Ht: 6'3" Wt: 200



**Alex  
RAMIREZ** 61

Age: 25, born October 3, 1974  
in Caracas, Venezuela

Position: Outfielder

B/T: R/R Ht: 5'11" Wt: 176



*They're New! You Won't Want To Miss Them.  
And They Benefit Cleveland Indians Charities!*

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*Memorabilia collectors have  
a new online destination —  
[www.indians.com](http://www.indians.com)*

*Cleveland Indians Charities will make  
three autographed items available per  
week for online auction via the Tribe's  
website, [www.indians.com](http://www.indians.com)*

Weekly auctions begin Monday, April 3, and will last from 3PM Monday to 3PM the following Monday. The highest bidders at the conclusion of each weekly auction will be contacted via e-mail by the Indians for payment arrangements. Payments can be made by MasterCard, the preferred credit card of the Cleveland Indians, or by VISA, Discover, American Express or by check made payable to Cleveland Indians Charities. The items will be mailed upon receipt of payment.

The highest bidders will have 48 hours to respond to the e-mail notification of their bid selection before the next highest bidder will be awarded the item. Minimum bids for each item will range from \$50 - \$75. All items will include a letter of authenticity.

All proceeds benefit Cleveland Indians Charities which supports youth education and recreation programs in the Greater Cleveland area.

*Auction items will vary each week, but may include banners, autographed jerseys, bats, helmets, and photographs.*

